



ISAAC Social Media Policy, Guidelines and Best Practices

Policy

ISAAC – the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication – is a membership organization working to improve the lives of children and adults with complex communication needs.

ISAAC’s goal is to create worldwide awareness about how AAC can help individuals without speech. ISAAC accomplishes this by sharing information and promoting innovative approaches to research, technology and literacy through AAC. Activities include hosting the ISAAC biennial conference, sponsoring projects, and offering awards and scholarships.

ISAAC’s Vision is that AAC will be recognized, valued and used throughout the world.

ISAAC’s Mission is to promote the best possible communication for people with complex communication needs.

ISAAC recognizes the role that social media plays in the world today, allowing for the immediate and the expression of ideas. ISAAC currently has a social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

ISAAC’s goal in social media is to further the organization’s vision and mission. While sharing useful information and promoting ISAAC events and issues through social media, we are also aware that the public-facing image we maintain needs to remain constructive, accessible, and positive as we listen, connect, and engage with our stakeholders worldwide.

Guidelines

Communities have the power to make the world a better place. We know this because we see it happen every day through the work of the ISAAC Council, Executive Board, staff, and volunteers around the world.

ISAAC embraces the fact that communities do not only exist in the physical world, but also online. We recognize that social media platforms do not have defined geographical usage boundaries, and what happens in one region, zone, country or office could be noticed by others from around the world very quickly.

Although official communication on behalf of the organization is the primary responsibility of the Executive Director, we recognize that all of Council, the Executive Board, staff and volunteers using social media on behalf of ISAAC are key to helping ISAAC reach its communication goals.

These guidelines for social media use are designed to provide helpful, practical advice to assist the ISAAC Council, Executive Board, staff and volunteers to use social media, including their



own social media channels, thoughtfully and in due regard for any official responsibilities undertaken. While we encourage the use of social media to communicate about topics pertaining to AAC and ISAAC, staff and volunteers need to remain aware of their responsibilities to ISAAC's stakeholders and to our guiding principles as outlined in the Governance Handbook.

Who are these guidelines for?

These guidelines are for all ISAAC contractors, employees and volunteers who use any social media tools or online communication media, either personally or professionally, including, but not limited to, the following: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, or photo/video sharing platforms (both if you have your own blog or are posting comments on another individual's blog).

Please note this document is meant to provide guidelines for the use of social media. It does not supersede or amend any ISAAC contract or employment commitments, policies or the obligations of ISAAC contractors or employees.

Defining social media

Wikipedia describes social media as “media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue.”

Social media tools (or social media networking sites) include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, or photo/video sharing platforms, where users can share content and information with one another. In communications, social media differs from traditional forms because there are more opportunities for two-way communication with the general public, which essentially means more ways for people to communicate with our organization.

Being aware of the 'private' and 'public' controls, and awareness of the potential for wider distribution of social media posts

While communication through social media networks can be both professional and personal, this does not mean it is private, even if social media settings are set to 'private'. Written conversations taking place within even small public networks can be found through search engines such as Google. Even in cases where only your contacts can see what you write, the permanence and transferability of anything published or posted online means that there is a possibility that what you have said may be made visible to a wider audience or taken out of context. For example, private social media interactions can be inappropriately shared via 'screen shot' and distributed by email. As a result, all conversations within social media networks should be considered to be public or else possible to appear in the public domain or at least within a wider audience than intended when posting. It is important to keep this in mind when making social media posts to any audience.



Considering appropriateness of posts: Appropriate versus Inappropriate

ISAAC promotes and embraces the appropriate use of social media, as a means of creating and supporting a welcoming environment for discussion of ideas. ISAAC considers as inappropriate any use of social media that supports or engages in harassment of individuals or groups.

Online harassment includes—but is not limited to—participating in or encouraging others towards these behaviours: unwelcome conduct or offensive verbal comments related to gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, national origin, or religion; deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, impersonating, hacking, unwelcome or unauthorized posting of images or recordings, sustained disruption of online talks, webinars or other events.

Similarly, encouraging others to engage in such behaviour is not permitted, nor are false accusations of harassment.

Current Suggested Best Practices

The reality of social media is that the lines between professional and personal are easily blurred whenever you talk about ISAAC in your private social media channels. Therefore, when speaking about ISAAC in public or on social media platforms in general, we ask that you understand and follow these guidelines:

1. *Be a good ambassador*

While it is everyone's personal decision whether to use social media networks and tools, you should always be aware that your behaviour and opinions could reflect both positively and negatively on the organization. If you have identified yourself as being associated with ISAAC (employee, contractor, Council / Executive Board member, or volunteer), your posts online may be wrongly interpreted as being the official voice of the organization. Being a good ambassador means 'thinking before you post' about your role in ISAAC and considering the impact of your message upon ISAAC and its stakeholders.

2. *Use a disclaimer*

If you are using social media to talk about your involvement with ISAAC (whether volunteer or not), make it clear that the views you express are yours alone and do not necessarily reflect those of ISAAC. Be aware that doing this does not change your obligations under the ISAAC Governance Handbook, and that with or without a statement of this kind, your responsibilities remain the same.



If you have an 'about me' page on your blog, do not use photos where you stand in front of ISAAC logos or emblems since this might give the website or blog an official appearance. This includes photos for your Facebook page, Twitter avatar or other personal pages. Similarly, do not use the ISAAC name or other direct references to the organization in your avatar or online name.

This guideline will differ only in cases where individuals are using social media tools in an official capacity, as approved by ISAAC.

3. *Think of the news, your family, and your work colleagues and supervisors*

Do not say anything online that you would not be comfortable seeing quoted on the news, being asked about by your family or having to justify to your work colleagues or supervisors. Written conversations inside social media networks can often be found through search engines such as Google. Even in cases where only your contacts can see what you write, there is a possibility that one of them will forward what you say and make it visible to a wider audience. As a result, personal conversation within social media networks regarding ISAAC should always be considered public rather than private.

4. *Be positive and add value*

ISAAC believes that the process of communication and the sharing of information and experiences benefit all of our stakeholders. Share the passion you feel for your personal work with ISAAC and talk about the successes you have been a part of. If ISAAC Council, Executive Board, staff members, contractors, and volunteers are generous with sharing their knowledge and are responsive and helpful, this will reflect positively on you and on ISAAC, and also be of benefit to your audience.

Do not comment on the quality of work done by you or a colleague either within ISAAC or other organizations. Posting messages of support and encouragement are appropriate, but carrying on conversations about clients, beneficiaries or how work situations are managed is inappropriate.

5. *Do not engage in inappropriate online behaviour*

Do not engage in online harassment (or any other kind of inappropriate behaviour) of any kind or at any time (see section 'Appropriate versus Inappropriate'). If you are subjected to this behaviour, report the person to the social media platform that you are using with a complaint. You can also notify ISAAC about this if it affects you as a member, staff, or volunteer, or ISAAC and its reputation with stakeholders.



6. *Responding to concerns*

ISAAC, as with all non-profit organizations, works in complicated legal and operational contexts. Not all of the information about ISAAC's legal and ethical responsibilities is understood by parties who are not informed or aware of all of these contexts. If you come across a misrepresentation of ISAAC online, please contact our Manager of Communications to determine the best way to resolve the concern. In making requests for corrections of material posted by ISAAC or about ISAAC, be courteous and respectful and related to the facts (i.e., refrain from personal remarks).

7. *Correct your own mistakes when you are aware of them.*

If you have made a mistake, be prompt about 'correcting the record'. If you correct an earlier post in a blog, there are several considerations: (i) you could do so visibly (e.g., by using the strikethrough function and adding a paragraph that explains the update at the end), or (ii) you could do so invisibly, so as to remove the offending material completely. The judgment on this is up to the individual and the situation arising. If removing a tweet, simple 'delete' with no explanation needed. Deleting tweets and removing posts from Facebook is a personal decision, and is not seen as an admission of 'guilt'. Rather, if someone has been upset or taken offence, it is considered courteous to delete so that the offending message is no longer visible.

8. *Use your best judgment and consult ISAAC for advice*

It is best practice to not publish anything that you are unsure of. If you have any questions about the appropriateness of an online posting or publication relating to ISAAC, please ask our Manager of Communications for input and assistance.

9. *Protect your own privacy*

A lot of websites allow you some form of control over who can see your material. Use these features. Please be advised that controlling your privacy settings on online social media websites does not necessarily mean that your communications will be private.

10. *Keep security in mind*

IT is advisable not to post personal details such as your home address, telephone numbers, dates of birth, children's names, children's schools or any other personally identifying information that relates to other people.

11. *Do not use the ISAAC logo*

You cannot use the ISAAC logo as any part of your blog or social media profile (with the exception of official ISAAC social media channels as approved by the Executive Board, Executive Director, and/or Manager of Communications).

12. Respect privacy

Respect the confidentiality of personal and privileged information. In short, do not reveal confidential details of ISAAC EB members, Council members, contractors, employees or volunteers.

In addition please respect people's right to privacy and do not take photos or videos without their permission, and ensure consent is provided. Posting material about children relies upon parental consent and/or that of the child, depending on the jurisdiction.

13. When communicating with children and youth using social media or other electronic communication, always keep in mind the following:

- All communication with children and youth through social media sites should be in a manner that is open, transparent and follows these guidelines and any outlined in the ISAAC Governance Handbook.
- The primary purpose of communication with children and youth must be for providing information related to ISAAC or one of its Chapters' activities or events, and not for socializing or other personal interaction.
- When using an ISAAC social media account, EB members, Council members, contractors, employees, and volunteers must not initiate 'friend' requests with children or youth but may accept 'friend' requests from children or youth who are involved with ISAAC or one of its Chapters.
- Online 'chatting' with minors is not permitted.
- Pictures or videos of children and youth on the ISAAC social media sites should be with the parent's consent and/or permission of the child/youth (depending on jurisdiction), limited to documentation or promotion of group activities, and must not be used for the identification of individual group members. 'Tagging' or other identification of children or youth shown in photos or videos is not permitted.

14. If you notice criminal activity on an individual or group page, especially related to children (anyone under the age of 18 years), you have the responsibility and legal obligation to report it to the authorities

If an ISAAC contractor, employee, or volunteer notices online harassment, intimidation or bullying on the page of a minor or in a group managed by ISAAC, then volunteers and contractors or employees must report immediately any knowledge or observations of a child/youth being bullied, harassed, or abused to his/her immediate supervisor and/or according to existing Child Protection legislation.